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How to Love

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Book Review

How to Love

Author

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Illustrator

Reviewer

Meagan Andrus

Rating

Cannot Recommend

Level

Young Adult

Pages

389

Year

2013

Publisher

Balzar + Bray

ISBN

9780062216359

Reena and Sawyer have known each other their whole lives, and Reena has loved Sawyer for about that long. In high school, she pined after him, especially when her best friend began dating him. After a tragedy, Reena and Sawyer come together and fall deeply in love. Then one day, Sawyer leaves without telling anyone where he's going or when he'll return. Reena is left behind, newly pregnant and upset about the loss of a future she could have had. Nearly two years later, Sawyer returns and expects to be able to waltz back into Reena's life, just like that. Now Reena has to look out not only for herself, but for her baby daughter, Hannah. In the end, she has to decide if Sawyer is really a changed person who wants to be in their lives, or if he has remained the same immature boy she once knew him to be.

This book has no redeeming qualities. The characters are awful—awfully written and awful people. Sawyer is a drug addict who drags Reena to pleasure-filled parties, encourages her to skip school and important meetings, and seduces her into cheating on her loving boyfriend. It is unclear why Reena even likes Sawyer at all, other than for lustful reasons. Reena is no better. She lies to her friends and her family and continually makes bad choices when she's with Sawyer. The writing itself is horribly amateur and overblown. The plot reads like the worst soap opera television stations would actually air, with convenient “plot twists” or dramatic events occurring when things got too boring. Readers should skip over this book in favor of better-written romances with likeable, relatable characters and a plot that doesn't seem constructed based purely on the author's whims of fancy.

*Contains severe language and moderate sexual content.